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ABSTRACT

The Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) has made a strong commitment to building partnerships with business and industry. CCRI's first customized training program was developed in 1982 with the National Tooling and Machine Association (NTMA), and was designed to enable apprentice machinists to receive the classroom training required to earn a journeyman's certificate while simultaneously earning credit toward an associate in applied science degree. Following the success of the CCRI/NTMA program, the college entered into agreements to develop programs with other major Rhode Island Companies, including General Dynamics Corporation's Electric Boat Division. The more than 100 students enrolled in the CCRI/Electric Boat Program work as apprentice welders, shipfitters, machinists, pipefitters, marine assembly machinists, and sheet metal mechanics, while receiving classroom training required for the apprenticeship and earning credit toward an associate degree. For the most part, the employees' needs did not fit into existing CCRI degree programs. To remedy this, the college requested and received approval for a new degree program for an Associate in Applied Science in Technical Studies (AASTS). The AASTS allows students to earn an associate degree in 3 years without being limited to concentrating on predetermined technical fields. Students attend some classes at the CCRI campus and others at the company facility, with the company paying full tuition and the cost of books and supplies. (EJV)

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THE CCRI/ELECTRIC BOAT PROGRAM

A Partnership for Progress in Economic Development

Text of a presentation
by
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National Council for Occupational Education
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Partnerships for Progress in Economic Development:

THE CCRI/ELECTRIC BOAT PROGRAM

Introduction

The Community College of Rhode Island, like community and technical colleges across the country, has made a strong commitment to building partnerships with business and industry.

Cooperative training and retraining programs, properly developed, have a positive impact in a number of areas. Community colleges today must concern themselves with maintaining enrollments--the high school graduate pool is shrinking and the student population is becoming increasingly part time. Successful partnerships with industry can yield positive results for colleges in terms of enrollment, while solving a major problem for companies whose training needs can be met efficiently and cost effectively. Employees will receive the promotional and financial benefits that accrue from upgrading skill levels, and the state benefits from a more highly trained labor force.

Community colleges are in a particularly good position to respond

to the changing needs of business and industry because of the flexible nature of the institutions. CCRI has been able to develop customized courses and programs to meet the specific needs of a particular company on a timely basis.

CCRI's first customized training program was developed in 1982 with the Rhode Island/Southeastern Massachusetts Chapter of the National Tooling and Machining Association, an organization which represents more than 80 machine tool companies. The program was designed to enable apprentice machinists to receive the classroom training required to earn a Journeyman's Certificate while at the same time earning collegiate credit which could be applied toward a CCRI Associate in Applied Science degree in Machine Processes. Students attend classes at the College two evenings a week to fulfill the "theory" portion of the apprenticeship training program. They complete the "laboratory" or hands-on training, at their place of employment as part of the on-the-job training. College credit is awarded for successful completion of the hands-on training.

In order to adapt the machine processes program of study to meet

the needs of the NTMA, the College received a $7,000 grant to develop a modularized curriculum which breaks down areas of study into small, coherent units. Close to 100 students are currently participating in this program.

Following the success of the CCRI/NTMA program, the College entered into agreements to develop programs with other major Rhode Island companies.

General Dynamics Corporation - Electric Boat Division: A Model Program

CCRI has been providing the technical instruction to support the apprenticeship programs at General Dynamic's Corporation's Electric Boat Division at Quonset Point, Rhode Island, since Fall, 1983.

This customized program, which currently has an enrollment of over 100 students was designed in an innovative manner to meet the diverse needs of one of our state's major employers.

Students enrolled in the CCRI/Electric Boat Program work at Quonset Point as apprentice welders, shipfitters, machinists, pipefitters, marine assembly machinists and sheet metal mechanics. The

program was initiated to work in a manner similar to the CCRI/NTMA Program with employees receiving classroom training required for the apprenticeship while at the same time earning college credit toward an associate degree. Like the NTMA program, some college credit would be awarded for on-the-job training.

The only problem with this approach was that, with the exception of the apprentice machinists, the employees' needs did not fit into an existing CCRI degree program. A new degree program had to be created in order to be able to award college credit for technical training in the skill areas predominant among Electric Boat employees.

To remedy this situation, the Community College requested and in 1984 the Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education approved the creation of a new CCRI degree program--the Associate in Applied Science in Technical Studies.

The Associate in Applied Science in Technical Studies allows students to earn an Associate's Degree without being limited to concentrating on predetermined technical fields. The flexible, interdisciplinary program is designed to meet the needs of students who

want to take technical and general courses for college credit in order to meet the training or retraining demands of current or prospective employers.

The degree program awards 20 credits for an approved apprenticeship. The student must also earn 21 credits in general education and between 19 and 25 credits in technical courses and cognates. The number of credits required for graduation could vary from 60 to 66 depending on how the program is developed for a particular technical discipline.

The program can be completed in three years attending classes two evenings a week. It can take longer, however, for students who are not ready to handle college level math courses. It is not unusual for adults who have been out of school for some time to need developmental mathematics. Seven Electric Boat students are currently enrolled in arithmetic classes. To accommodate the varying levels of math proficiency, CCRI has a math lab which allows students to work at their own level and advance at their own pace. This is particularly successful with older students who may need some time less than a full

semester to "brush up" on skills.

Electric Boat students attend some classes at the CCRI campus and others at the company facility. The courses taught on-site at Quonset Point often deal with classified information and are taught by qualified Electric Boat personnel. An example would be a course in advanced blueprint reading where students use the data for actual government contracts.

The CCRI/Electric Boat program is offered at no cost to students. The company pays full tuition and the cost of books and supplies. The incentive for employees to enroll in and successfully complete the program is clearly spelled out by company management--without the associate degree, there will be no opportunity for advancement.

The first class of 18 Electric Boat students received their degree last June.

Looking to the future: the CCRI Center for Training and Development

In an effort to reach out to other companies in Rhode Island, CCRI established a Center for Training and Development last year.

The Center offers customized courses and programs for business and industry on a credit or non-credit basis.

The College's association with companies across the state continues to grow. These emerging partnerships are benefitting the College, the companies involved and, in a larger sense, the economy of the state of Rhode Island. In successfully developed business/industry partnerships, there are no losers.

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